

Wembdon Annual Parish Meeting

Held at the Parish Centre Wembdon on the 10th April 2012

At 7pm

Present at the meeting 10 members of the Parish Council and 10 other local residents.

Opening Remarks by the Chairman:

Welcome and approval of the minutes from the last APM in 2011 they were proposed and accepted by the meeting as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting

Chairman's Report

Thank you all very much for coming to this annual Parish meeting. I am Mike Solomon and I am Chairman of the Wembdon Parish Council.

This is my once in a year opportunity to address the village and the Council from my position as Chairman and I would like to take this time to pay tribute to all of the Parish Councillors for the work that they have put in on behalf of our community.

Let me first say that I know that our Council is the envy of many of the Parishes that I meet, not only because we represent almost every age group, we also have a good gender balance and between us we live in almost all areas in the Parish. We are also a team, we work together and this has been commented on by other Councillors in our District and County. I must also give full recognition to the support provided by our new Parish Clerk, who joined us at the beginning of this year. He brings with him a great deal of expertise and experience in managing a Council and its finances. It has been of great benefit to me to be able to rely upon his advice and good judgement.

As a Council we have tackled a number of projects this year. Clearly the most visible to everybody in the Parish and one which I think we should all be grateful for is the re-instatement of the Parish Newspaper and I am particularly delighted to report that in this, only our third issue, we have contributions in the paper from the Church, the WCA, Wembdon Junior Football Club, the rounder's team and Wembdon Cricket Club. I am also delighted to report that thanks to the efforts of the communications team this Parish newspaper is now being produced at almost zero cost to the Parish. I am also grateful to the communications team for their regular updates on Twitter and their work to ensure that the Parish website carries all of our records and information in a format that everyone can access.

Another significant project that has been undertaken in the past twelve months is the purchase of the allotments and we are about to work with BAM, the contractors working at the new Chilton School, to resurface the track and make a general improvement to the whole area. I have had many favourable comments from people in the Parish on the work that has been done in this area and this reflects well on all involved.

The Council has also worked closely with the Land Drainage Board and with them we have organised the clearance of the rhyne at the edge of our leased land and I was delighted only last weekend to see some lads tadpole-ing, quite successfully, in that stretch of the rhyne. We are also well aware of the problems along the Crowpill rhyne, with flooding at the Millennium bridge and safety concerns along the side of the rhyne and we are pressing the Land Drainage Board to work with us on solutions to these problems.

A major amount of work has also been undertaken with other community groups to make sure that everybody in this Parish has the opportunity to celebrate our Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It was interesting to read in the old records that a predecessor Council in the 1890's held sports and games in a playing field and hosted a meal for the Parish to celebrate the previous Diamond Jubilee. I am sure that our plans for commemorative coins, games, a picnic, a pig roast and our beacon will also encourage the community to celebrate a diamond jubilee in style.

A little appreciated but constant responsibility of this Council is to prepare our responses to Planning Applications. Now this goes on week by week as applications come in for house extensions, conservatories and day-to-day building works but in addition there are also the major applications that have the potential to significantly impact our village. Your Councillors have spent many hours at meetings of the examination of the core strategy and more recently the Cokerhurst Farm Appeal presenting our concerns, especially over traffic and the lack of adequate infrastructure to support such developments. I thank the Councillors and the members of the Parish for their attendance and support in these hearings.

The Council has also been active in helping with more local issues, distributing salt/grit to the Parish Centre through the cold periods and we have also installed two new grit bins, which seems to have fended off the cold weather. We are also installing new Notice Boards to ensure that Parish information is available to everyone within our boundaries and to make our residents in the new areas feel that they too are a part of Wembdon. And of course there is the constant attention to the Playing Field to regularly pick up the litter and to maintain safety checks on the play equipment.

Our Highways team have had meetings with the County Highways Engineer to highlight specific traffic issues and we constantly highlight the hazards of traffic on our narrow village road and the potential threat posed to our residents by heavy goods vehicles along the NDR and especially at the Quantock roundabout and Sandford Corner. I would like to pay a special tribute here to our Speed watch team, a very public spirited group of people. I see their work becoming ever more important as we watch the traffic increase as the Hinkley C development takes off. Clearly our next big challenge is to try to protect our Parish from adverse effects from the construction and operation of the Hinkley Point C power station. We all understand that we need the jobs, we all understand that we need the power, but we are all fearful of the impact of the scale of the increase in traffic.

So at the start of a new Council year, I look forward with a very enthusiastic, representative and competent team. Our finances are on a sound footing and every Councillor has a real desire to do his or her bit to keep Wembdon a great place to live and bring up a family.

Mike Solomon
Chairman

Questions from the attendees

Waste management issues in Skimmerton Lane
(report to the County).

District Council clean surroundings project 89 Wembdon Hill
(Sedgemoor to be informed).

General fly tipping in the village.

Police need more briefing on issues relating to rubbish.

We need to encourage PC Tony Freeman to attend as many meetings as possible.

Points of Note at the meeting

12th and 13th of April IPC Recommendations to Government on Hinkley it was felt that School holidays were a bad choice for meetings to take place.

The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm

